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SUBJECT: CLIMATE CONFUSION: 10TH DELHI SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

SUMMIT UNDERSCORES UNCERTAINTY ON THE WAY FORWARD

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Delhi Sustainable Development Summit, held February 5 - 7, 2010, was notable for the overwhelming support for Dr. R.K. Pachauri, the recently embattled chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and also for a distinct lack of ideas, bordering on outright confusion, on the direction climate negotiations should take to reach agreement at the 16th Conference of Parties (COP-16) to the UNFCCC in Mexico. Indian Minister of Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh proved an exception in his call for clarity on the concept of equity as it relates to future carbon emissions as opposed to historical emissions, but discussion of the interplay between the Copenhagen Accord, the Bali Action Plan, and the Kyoto Protocol was noticeably lacking. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) The Delhi Sustainable Development Summit (DSDS) is an annual conference hosted by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), an Indian NGO whose Director General is IPCC chairman Dr. R.K. Pachauri. As the first major international conference on climate change post Copenhagen, expectations were relatively mild due to potential climate fatigue as well as to recent attacks on Dr. Pachauri in the press for errors in IPCC reporting concerning the melt rate of Himalayan glaciers and questions regarding his personal finances and potential conflicts of interest. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh inaugurated DSDS 2010 and set a tone of full support and faith in both Dr. Pachauri and the IPCC. PM Singh called Pachauri "far sighted" and stated "India has full confidence in the IPCC process and its leadership and will support it in every way it can." Similar sentiments were echoed by speakers throughout the conference.

COPENHAGEN ACCORD

13. (U) In his inaugural address, PM Singh stated India fully supported the Copenhagen Accord and will take it forward noting there was much in the Accord that can bring consensus to the climate negotiations. However, he went on to state the Accord was not a substitute but a complement to the UNFCCC negotiations on the Kyoto Protocol and Long Term Cooperation. He called for negotiations to begin again as soon as possible, perhaps as early as March, and although he made it clear the GOI stands fully behind the Kyoto Protocol, he also stated "a modest accord that is fully implemented may be better than an ambitious one that falls seriously short of its targets."

¶4. (U) Minister of Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh stated the Accord was a major step forward but that one of the reasons it was not adopted by the Conference of Parties in Copenhagen (COP-15) was due to a problem with the negotiating process which some countries did not consider sufficiently transparent. Denmark came under fire multiple times due to its management of COP-15 however Danish Minister for Climate and Energy Lykke Friis responded to criticism by noting Denmark was not suffering any sense of "climate depression" but rather felt Denmark was "gaining traction on a realistic approach" in the form of the Copenhagen Accord. Most governmental speakers offered varying degrees of support for the Accord such as Slovenian President Danilo Turk who stated it was "an important positive step that should not be undermined by public expectations," while non-governmental speakers attacked the Accord with Jeffrey Sachs claiming "Copenhagen was broken by the United States and others" and calling the Accord an "empty promise."

CONFUSION ON THE WAY FORWARD

¶5. (U) The theme of DSDS 2010 was "Beyond Copenhagen: New Pathways to Sustainable Development" though there were very few new pathways offered during the conference. The suggestions for moving forward included adopting the sectoral approach, negotiating a "cafeteria" of separate agreements as opposed to one over-arching agreement, and from French Climate Change Ambassador Brice Lalonde, a recommendation to utilize the building blocks of the Copenhagen Accord as the basis for a legally binding agreement. Professor Kandeh Yumkella from the UN Industrial Development Organization strongly urged going to Mexico with ready funding in order to build trust with developing countries. Nobel Laureate Professor Wangari

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Maathai suggested soliciting support of religious leaders to help spread the message that God's creation is under threat and motivate people to take action at an individual level. As to the negotiating process itself, while COP-15 was widely condemned as an example of how not to conduct climate negotiations, ideas for COP-16 were weak and ranged from the need for early negotiations, to having an agreed text ready months in advance, to the conclusion that only heads of state would be able to negotiate a final text.

¶6. (U) Minister Ramesh stated the primary roadblock on the way forward was the ability to anchor a legally binding agreement in the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. He claimed that without such an anchor, "Cancun [COP-16] is doomed." Ramesh noted the world fully understood the concept of equity in regard to the stock of historical emissions, but not in regard to the flow of future emissions. He stated that without clarity on the concept of equity in the flow of future emissions, "you won't have India and China coming on board with a legally binding agreement in Cancun."

¶7. (SBU) COMMENT: The strongest impression emerging from DSDS 2010 was that nobody has a clear idea of how to achieve success at COP-16. While there was strong support for the science of climate change, the IPCC, and Dr. Pachauri in particular, there was neither consensus nor solid suggestions on how to craft an agreement to fit the science. The GOI used the conference as a venue to test its ability to walk a line in support of the Copenhagen Accord as a major economy and part of the BASIC group without alienating the G-77 by undermining the Kyoto Protocol and the Bali Action Plan. However, PM Singh's statement regarding a modest accord being better than an ambitious protocol may be an indication of what India would like to see at COP-16. END COMMENT.

ROEMER